

THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

pro bono humani generis

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Joshua Lederberg
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The Honorable Jim Cooper
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congressman Cooper:

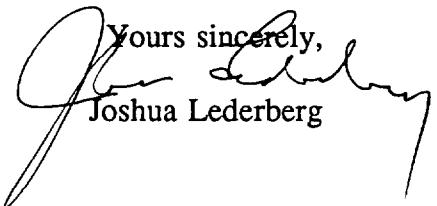
I enjoyed your presentation on managed competition at CSIS Thursday morning. As a long term colleague of Alan Enthoven at Stanford, I have long favored this approach.

I was the one who questioned you about public health under managed competition. You correctly pointed out a likely shift in motivation towards preventive care under that regime. It would be interesting to survey what HMO's now do in that direction -- I would judge they are perhaps worthy of a score of B or B+.

But as the example of your mother-in-law in public health in Mississippi illustrates, there is much more to public health than preventive care for individual enrollees in a particular HMO. There is a "commons" of responsibility for public health surveillance and epidemic management -- burdens that have been relegated from pillar to post -- which will continue to be neglected under managed competition focussed on individual patients. I fear they will be even more egregiously lost in the shuffle over health care access. So, please, do not close your eyes to those needs: they need structural attention as well as enhancement of motivation.

Some of these issues are addressed in Emerging Infections -- a report enclosed which I co-chaired for the IOM. If you have the time, I would be happy to visit you for further discussion.

Godspeed on your sensible efforts,

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg